

THE HOHUMONO NOUN CLASS SYSTEM*

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0.0. Introduction

The Hohumono language has been studied previously by Thomas Cook with the assistance of Samuel E. Ekpo. His findings appeared in Research Notes Vol.2, No.3 1969 under the title 'Some tentative notes on the Hohumono language'. In it, the Hohumono noun class system is outlined, and a list is given of the independent prefixes and the determiners of the noun. Less attention is given to concord. In de Wolf (1971:147-154) we find a detailed comparative study of the Hohumono class system within the context of Bembe-Congo class systems, based on data from Cook (1969). Other studies have been undertaken of noun class systems of Cross River languages, such as Barnwell (1969) on Mbenbe. To be mentioned especially is Winston's study of the nominal class system of Loke* (Winston 1962) which is strikingly similar to that of Hohumono.¹

In this study an attempt will be made to present an overall synchronic picture of the Hohumono noun class system, which will integrate Cook's findings and expand on them. A certain amount of repetition of earlier published material will therefore be unavoidable. Where relevant, reference will be made to the parallel descriptions in Winston and Barnwell.

0.1. Definitions

Some of the terms used in this study are defined as follows:²

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- 1 Among studies of noun class systems of Cross River languages, which were not available to me at the time when this was written, are several long essays written by students of the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages of the University of Ibadan. They are listed in Williamson (1976), and have been included in the references below.
- 2 For a more complete discussion of the theoretical framework, much of which is based on personal communications from Patrick Bennett, see Sterk (1977: 122ff) and Sterk (1978).

noun prefix: one of a set of recurring particles which, together with a noun stem, make up either a singular, plural, or, as far as number is concerned, a neutral noun;

declension: the pair of prefixes which, when combined with a noun stem, constitute this noun in its singular and in its plural. Also: a group of nouns which share the same prefixes in the singular and in the plural;

class: a specific pattern of syntactic concord operated by a noun (either singular or plural) in the sentence. Also: a group of nouns operating the same concord pattern in the sentence;

gender: the pairing of two concord classes, one for the noun in its singular form, the other for its plural form. Also: a group of nouns that share the same singular/plural class pairing.

These definitions entail a distinction in principle between the declension of a noun and its gender, since it is not always the case that nouns with the same declension operate the same type of concord, i.e. belong to the same gender.

Not all nouns have two prefixes, one for the singular and another for the plural. Many nouns have only one prefix, such that the distinction between singular and plural in most cases is neutralized. To facilitate the description, such nouns will be listed together with the regular declensions, and will be called, however incongruously, single-prefix declensions. Such nouns will then constitute single-class genders.

1. Noun prefixes and determiners

It is characteristic of the concord system of Hohumono, as well as of Nhembe and Loke, that there are two distinct patterns of agreement: one is based on the noun's prefix, and is mostly alliterative (we will call it Type A); the other is based on the noun's determiner (Type B). Although generally nouns with the same prefixes have the same determiner, the phonological shape of the determiners cannot be predicted from that of the prefixes.

The following are the prefixes that have been found, with the determiners that are associated with them. A sample noun for each is given.³

3 The transcription is broad phonetic. The prefixes listed in Tables 1 and 2 have been left unmarked for tone. Elsewhere vowels unmarked for tone have a (phonetic) mid tone. [ɸ] is a voiced bilabial fricative. [ɸ̥] is the lenis counterpart of a fortis [ɸ]. Word-final plosives are unreleased. The vowels occur in two parallel sets distinguished by the feature of Expandedness (also called Advanced Tongue Root). Non-Expanded vowels are marked with a dot. Within a word or phrase, vowel harmony occurs so that only members of the

Table 1: Mohumono noun prefixes and the determiners associated with them

Number	Pref.	Det.			
1	laa	o	ḡnḡḡ gwḡ	'the (aforementioned) person'	
	lḡ	ḡ	gwḡ gwḡ	'the woman' ⁴	
	lab	ḡ	ḡsa gwḡ	'the father'	
	lac	u	uwa gwḡ	'the book'	
	lad	n	ngbḡkḡḡ gwḡ	'the chain' (Efik loan)	
2	2a	bḡ	bḡnḡḡ bḡ	'the persons'; bḡnḡḡ bḡ	'the oil'
	2ḡ	ḡ	fḡn bḡ	'the children'; bḡ bḡ	'the women'
	2b	bḡ	bḡtḡ bḡ	'the yams'; bḡpḡ bḡ	'the mud'
3	3	ḡ	jḡ	ḡvḡm jḡ	'the cows'
4	4	i	ḡzam jḡ	'the farm'; ḡfḡ jḡ	'the dogs'
	hḡ	ḡ	jḡ	jḡn jḡ	'the nose'
5	5a	rḡ	rḡtḡ sḡ	'the head'	
	5ḡ	ḡ	sḡn sḡ	'the eye'	
	5b	rḡ	rḡḡḡn sḡ	'the fire'	
	5c	rḡ	rḡpḡ sḡ	'the horn'	
	5d	rḡ	rḡkpḡ sḡ	'the home'	
6	6	rḡ	rḡtḡḡ jḡ	'the stones'	
	6ḡ	ḡ	yḡn jḡ	'the eyes'	
7	7aa	hḡ	hḡbḡ kwḡ	'the hand'	
	7ab	hḡ	hḡmḡ kwḡ	'the mouth'	
	7b	hḡ	hḡkpḡ kwḡ	'the net'	
8	8	hḡ	hḡḡḡ sḡ	'the body'; hḡtḡ sḡ	'the ears'
9	9	hḡ	hḡse sḡ	'the tree'	
10	10a	bḡ	bḡvḡn fḡ	'the thing'	
	10b	bḡ	bḡsi fḡ	'the food'; bḡde fḡ	'the oil palms'
11	11	bḡ	bḡyḡn fḡ	'the bird'	

same set co-occur. For the phonetic correlates of "Expanded", see Lindau (1976). In general we may say that the non-Expanded vowels are lower and more centralized than their expanded counterparts. a, the expanded counterpart of ḡ (which, phonetically, is [a]), in Mohumono is strongly centralized, raised and slightly fronted. It has a distinct schwa-like quality.

As for the numbering of the prefixes, those that are associated with the same determiners are given the same first number. The letters (a, b, aa, ab, ...) following the number refer to phonological differentiations either in the Type A concord as specified in Table 2 (first or only letter after the number), or in the noun prefix itself (second letter).

⁴ The suggestion by Winston (1962:57) that some of the nouns classified here as having a ḡ-prefix (such as 'woman' [singular and plural], 'nose', and maybe others) have in fact prefixes of Type B, i.e. derived from the determiners, is very interesting.

The tone of the prefixes is unpredictable, although it is mostly low. The prefixes have all been assigned non-expanded vowels to simplify the description. The choice is rather arbitrary since a rule of vowel harmony (or rather a Sequence-Structure-Condition, see Schachter and Fromkin 1968:55) only states that the vowel of the noun prefix and the vowel(s) of the noun stem must agree in expandedness.⁵ The vowels of the determiners possess their feature of expandedness independently of the nouns.

2. Genders

In principle, if the agreement operated by a noun differs from that operated by another noun, even if the difference is small, these two nouns belong to different classes. This gives origin to a large number of classes in Hohumono. Moreover, the number of genders, i.e. the singular/plural pairing of these classes in Hohumono, is large, prompting de Wolf to write - rather disparagingly - that "[Hohumono is] a class language with scarcely fewer classes than PBC but with more genders, half of which are insignificant product of proliferation." (1969:154). In the following table, genders have been numbered with Roman numbers. The number of nouns recorded for each gender is indicated, listing those with Expanded vowels (column marked EV) separately from those with non-Expanded vowels (column marked NEV). The concord particles for each gender are given, including both Type A and Type B which were mentioned earlier. The subdivision of Type A into Aa and Ab will be explained below (3.1). The tone of the concord particles is determined by their syntactic environment.

5 In Gade, a Niger-Kaduna language, a similar situation exists. However, there we find a phonological rule of assimilation which turns non-Expanded vowels into their expanded counterparts whenever they associate with expanded vowels. Expanded vowels never become non-expanded. In Gade, therefore, it is possible to posit underlying non-Expanded vowels for all prefixes, which become expanded when attached to a noun stem with an expanded vowel. If noun prefixes were posited with underlying Expanded vowels, one would be unable to explain their occurrence in nouns with non-expanded vowels in both prefix and stem. My knowledge of the phonology of Hohumono is insufficient at this stage to know whether assimilation in Expandedness is "one way" or not. For Gade, see Sterk (1977:15ff.).

Table 2: Hobumono genders

Gender	Declension		Conc. Aa	Conc. Ab	Concord B	EV	NEV	Tot.
I	1aa/2a	q/ya				5	10	15
	1ø/2ø	ø/ø	q/bø	q/q	gwq/be	-	3	3
	7aa/8	hq/hq				1	-	1
II	1aa	q				-	3	3
	1ab	ø				-	3	3
	1ø	ø	q	q	gwq	-	1	1
	7aa	hq				-	1	1
III	1aa/4	q/i				10	6	16
	1ab/4	ø/i				2	1	3
	1ac/4	u/i	q/i	q/i	gwq/ji	3	4	7
	1ad/4	n/i				-	1	1
IV	3/4	ø/i	q/i	q/i	je/ji	14	40	54
V	3	ø	ø	ø	je	-	1	1
VI	4	i				6	6	12
	4ø	ø	i	i	ji	1	-	1
VII	4/6	i/rø	i/rø	i/q	je/je	-	2	2
VIII	2a/6	bø/rø	bø/rø	ø/q	be/je	1	2	3
IX	2a	bø	bø	ø	be	-	1	1
X	5b/4	rø/i	rø/i	ø/i	se/ji	3	6	9
XI	5c/4	rø/i	rø/i	ø/i	se/ji	1	-	1
XII	5a//6	rø/rø				13	17	30
	5aø/6ø	ø/ø	rø/rø	ø/ø	se/je	-	1	1
XIII	5b/6	rø/rø	rø/rø	ø/ø	se/je	2	1	3
XIV	5d/6	rø/rø	rø/rø	ø/ø	se/je	-	1	1
XV	5aø	ø	rø	ø/ø	se	1	-	1
XVI	5b	rø				1	2	3
	5bø	ø	rø	ø/ø	se	-	1	1

XVII	5c	ry	ry	q	se	-	1	1
XVIII	6	re	re	q	je	3	4	7
XIX	5b/8	rq/hj	rq/hj	q/q	se/sj	-	1	1
XX	5b/10b	rq/vy	rq/vy	q/q	se/fe	1	2	3
XXI	5c/10b	ry/vy	ry/vy	q/q	se/fe	-	2	2
XXII	7aa/4	hq/i	hq/i	q/i	kwe/ji	-	1	1
XXIII	7aa	hq	hq	q	kwe	2	2	4
XXIV	7aa/8 7ab/8	hq/hj hq/hj	hq/hj	q/q	kwe/sj	8 -	8 .2	16 2
XXV	7b/8	hy/hj	hy/hj	q/q	kwe/sj	2	2	4
XXVI	8/10b	hj/vy	hj/vy	q/q	sj/fe	2	4	6
XXVII	8	hj	hj	q	sj	1	2	3
XXVIII	9/2b	he/be	he/be	q/q	se/be	11	21	32
XXIX	9	he	he	q	se	1	4	5
XXX	2b	be	be	q	be	-	1	1
XXXI	10a/6	bo/re	bo/re	q/q	fe/je	1	-	1
XXXII	10b/6	bu/re	bu/re	q/q	fe/je	2	-	2
XXXIII	10b	bu	bu	q	fe	1	2	3
XXXIV	10a/2b	bo/be	bo/be	q/q	fe/be	-	1	1
XXXV	10a/8	bo/hj	bo/hj	q/q	fe/sj	1	-	1
XXXVI	10a/10b	bo/bo	bo/bu	q/q	fe/fe	3	-	3

XXXVII	11/4	b1/4	b1/4	e/4	f4/44	1	-	1
XXXVIII	11/10b	b1/10b	b1/10b	e/4	f1/fe	3	5	8
Totals:						109	179	288

Ignoring the one-prefix declensions, it can be seen from Table 2 that prefixes 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 only occur as singular prefixes; 4 and 6 only as plural prefixes (gender VII, 4/6, where 4 appears as a singular prefix appears suspect since the plurals with prefix 6 were given very tentatively); while prefixes 2, 8 and 10 occur as both singular and plural.

Only three genders appear to be associated with noun stems that share a semantic feature. In genders I and II, the prefixes are associated with noun stems characterized by the feature [+human]. In gender VIII, prefixes (including 2 which we encountered also in gender I) are associated with noun stems sharing the feature [+liquid]. On the prefix of the "liquid class", see Welmers (1973:166, 206).

3. Concord

Concord elements, following Winston (1962), can be divided into dependent and independent. The areas where dependent concord operates will be divided broadly into three: verbal, pronominal, and adjectival. The following table can be drawn up (Type A and B refer to the two types of agreement mentioned earlier).

Table 3: Concord element types in Ehomono

	Independent elements	Dependent elements		
Associated with:	NOUNS	VERBALS	SELF-STANDING PRONOUNS	ADJECTIVES
Type:	A and B	A	B	A and B

This table is to be interpreted as follows: independent concord elements are associated with nouns. They are the noun's prefix (Type A) and the noun's determiner (Type B). Dependent concord elements are associated with non-nominal sentence constituents: the verbals of the sentence will agree with the noun

subject's prefix, self-standing pronouns with their antecedent's determiner, and adjectivals with the prefix and/or the determiner of their head noun.

In Table 2 we merely listed both the independent and the dependent concord elements. We have now to describe how these elements function in a sentence.⁶

3.1 Verbals

The agreement of verbals (which we divide into verbs and auxiliaries without attempting to define these categories too precisely) is with the subject of the sentence, and the agreement is of Type A, i.e. based on the noun prefix. The agreement cannot be called alliterative in all cases. Not only are there nouns with zero prefixes which nevertheless operate a subject concord using the Type A particles of their class (such as 'eye', 'child', 'nose'), but there is another pattern discernible which is associated with the phonological shape of the noun prefixes which is not alliterative. This type of concord, observable with auxiliaries, consists of a vowel pattern, rather than a (C)V alliteration with the noun prefix. This agreement pattern is limited to those cases where the noun prefix consists of a vowel only, and it is the result of vowel assimilation (see below under 3.12). The agreement will then be a pattern of vowels of the same quality as the vowel of the noun prefix. In the case of consonant-initial noun prefixes these auxiliaries exhibit no agreement, but instead have the vowel a. We have named the alliterative concord elements Type Aa, while the vowel pattern concords have been designated Type Ab. Both have been listed side by side in Table 2.

3.11 Verbs

The agreement operating is Aa. Agreement elements, as a general rule, assimilate in vowel harmony to the item they are associated with. Examples (morpheme-by-morpheme translations are given between quotation marks; free

6 A detailed comparison of the Mbebe, Lok and Hohumono systems of agreement is outside the scope of this paper. As has been noted earlier, however, the double type of agreement is present in all three languages. Moreover, the syntactic categories associated with each type appear to be basically the same. Winston's distribution pattern for Lok (Type A concord before consonant-initial stems, Type B before vowel-initial stems or before a Type A element) cannot be consistently applied in Hohumono. One might hesitate, in fact, to consider these to be the decisive factors accounting for the distribution of the two types of agreement. It may be preferable to account for them in strictly syntactic terms.

3.12 Auxiliaries

The agreement with the subject is of Type Ab. The following categories do not pretend to be exhaustive. They only indicate the "auxiliaries" encountered so far in the data. The vowels of the auxiliaries harmonize in expandedness with the following verb.

Future interrogative

- (15) ɔ̌gwə hǎǎ rǎǎ rǎǎ hǎgwə sǎ 'will you taste the soup?', "you will-
QUEST. taste soup the"
(16) ɔ̌gwə hǎǎ rǎǎ sǎsǎǎ 'will the book fall?'
(17) ɔ̌vəm hǎǎ rǎǎ hǎrǎhǎ 'will the cow jump?'
(18) hǎkǎhǎ hǎǎ rǎǎ hǎhǎrǎhǎ? 'will the crab jump?'

"Not yet"

- (19) ɔ̌gwə hǎsǎǎ sǎǎ 'the book has not fallen yet'
(20) ɔ̌vəm ɔ̌vəm hǎzǎǎ sǎ 'the cow has not eaten yet'
(21) hǎzǎǎ ɔ̌ sǎǎ 'it (i.e. pude 'oil palm') has not fallen yet'
(22) hǎrǎǎ sǎǎ 'they (i.e. cows) have not fallen yet'

"wanted to"

The exact meaning of the word following ɔ̌gw 'want' is not clear. Both forms (one with ɔ̌ and one with r, apparently with the same meaning) exhibit the Ab concord with the subject of the main sentence.

- (23) ɔ̌drom bǎ ɔ̌-nɔ̌ ɔ̌tarǎ ɔ̌-gwə gwǎ 'the men wanted to swim'
(24) ɔ̌vəm ɔ̌ ɔ̌-nɔ̌ ɔ̌tarǎǎ gwə gwǎ 'the cow wanted to swim'
(25) ɔ̌təm ɔ̌-nɔ̌ ɔ̌tǎǎǎ hǎ 'the lizard wanted to jump'
(26) ɔ̌vəm ɔ̌-nɔ̌ ɔ̌tǎǎǎ ɔ̌-sǎ 'the frog wanted to fall'

The negative marker is hǎ. Because of vowel assimilation its form often changes so that it appears to obey an Ab type of agreement:

- (27) ɔ̌drom hǎ sǎ (< ɔ̌drom hǎ ɔ̌-sǎ) 'the man did not fall'

Compare:

- (28) ɔ̌tǎǎ hǎ ɔ̌-sǎ 'the stone did not fall'

It is possible to explain in a similar way the phonological shape of the auxiliaries: they are the result of vowel assimilation between the

auxiliary and the subject concord element attached to the verb that follows. Since a distinct pattern of agreement is created this way, however, it is thought best at this point to list it as such.

3.2 Self-standing pronouns

The term is borrowed from Winston (1962). They are defined here as pronouns whose antecedent noun is not present in the same sentence in which they themselves occur. As such it is only by extending the concept of concord that we are able to include them here. These pronouns operate a B-type of concord with their antecedent.

Object pronouns

(29) ɔ yəŋ fɛ 'he saw it' (i.e. 'the bird' hɛyən fɛ)

(30) sɛ hɛ ɛrɛp 'I did not buy it' (i.e. 'the stone' rɛtɛn sɛ), "it not I-bought" (verb-object inversion occurs).

Note that in the case of singular personal object pronouns, as was pointed out by Cook (1969:10), the order (SUBJECT), (NEG.MARKER), SUBJ.CONCORD-VERB, OBJECT, which is the underlying sequence, becomes, through verb stem and object inversion: (SUBJECT), (NEG.MARKER), SUBJ.CONCORD-OBJECT-VERB, and the subject concord element and the object fuse. Example:

(31) ɛɔ-yəŋ 'he saw you', "he-you saw"

(32) ɔrɛm gwənɛɛ ɛn-yəŋ 'that man saw me', "man that he-me saw"

(33) hɛ pɛ-kpɛ 'I did not beat him', "NEG. I-him beat"

Neither the rules that govern the fusion nor, indeed, the exact nature of the elements involved are known at this stage. Since in most cases the final vowel of the fused element is the same as the final vowel of the independent subject pronoun corresponding in person and number to the object involved in the fusion, we may say that the agreement between the object and its nominal antecedent is regular. It is therefore of Type B. This is based on the argument that the independent subject pronouns are, in fact, determiners. Although not directly within the scope of this paper, this argument is discussed below (footnote 10).

If the personal object pronoun is plural, however, no inversion or fusion occurs:

- (34) o yen dō 'he saw us' (dō 'we', indep. subj. pronoun)

- (35) q yəm bə 'he saw them' (əbə 'they')⁹

Verbal complement

- (36) o rã sã 'it is it' (i.e. 'the stone' rãtã sã)

- (37) o rɛ ʒɛ 'it is them' (i.e. 'the cows' ʒvɔm ʒɛ)

- (38) o rá nə 'it is him/her' (ə) 's)be', indep. subject-pronoun
[see footnote 10]

It is on the basis of (38) that we are able to distinguish these forms from (29)-(35). No verb-object inversion and fusion are possible here.

Possessives⁹

- (39) o rá ðsum 'it is mine' (i.e. 'the stone' rət̪ə́ sɛ; 'I' ðn̪m)

- (40) o rá sarəbə 'it is theirs' (i.e. 'the stone'; 3pl 'they')

The "afore-mentioned"

This, in fact, is probably the underlying function of the words we have called determiners. râten sô really means 'the stone which was mentioned earlier'. When replacing a noun or subject of a sentence, the "determiner" is prefixed by s-. Examples:

- (41) ʔiŋ ra-sə 'they (i.e. 'the stones' rəŋŋ jə) fell down'

- (42) *ʔiŋ bi-hut* 'it (i.e. 'the bird' *biŋən ʔi*) flew'

In the following examples, and and the are usually described as independent subject pronouns. They are included here deliberately, however, because the structures (43) and (44) are thought to be exactly parallel to (41) and (42):

- (43) am o-sə 'he (afore-mentioned) fell'

8 Not explained by these rules is the form ŋo yān no 'he saw you (pl.)', which combines a fused element (he-you (sg), see (31) above), and a regular plural object pronoun following the verb as in (34) and (35). Note that in this irregular form the object pronoun has a mid tone, while in (34) and (35) the tone is low. This may be an intonational difference.

9 The morphological composition of possessive pronouns has been described in Cook (1969). See also 3.33 below.

(44) ʒbɛ ɓa-aʒ 'they (afore-mentioned) fell'.¹⁰

3.3 Adjectivals

We include here, tentatively, all items that qualify a noun and (normally) exhibit an agreement with it. The agreement can be of Type A or Type B, sometimes even within the same class of items as in the case of the numerals. Or the agreement may combine both Type A and Type B concords as in the case of

10. The alternative to interpreting the independent pronouns as composed of q + determiner (as ʒɛ and ʒɛɛ in (41) and (42)) is to consider them to be regular nouns composed of a prefix q- and a noun stem. ʒaɛ q-sɛ 'he fell' would then be parallel to, for example, ʒaɛ q-sɛ 'father fell', rather than to ʒɛ q-sɛ 'she (i.e. cow) fell'. This interpretation would give rise to difficulties, however. The main problem would be the irregularity which then arises in the concord system. In genders II and III the noun stems with prefix q- have q as concord Aa. Only ʒaɛ '(s)he' would conform to this. The concord of the five other independent pronouns varies, it is N- for ʒɛ 'I'; ɓa for ʒbɛ 'they' (as in (44)), etc. This would strain the system. The interpretation of ʒaɛ, etc. as underlying determiners also facilitates the analysis of (34), (35), (36), (39) and (40) where the objects/complements are derived from independent subject pronouns, and where they occur in a position occupied elsewhere by regular determiners.

Not all problems are solved this way, however. There are tonal problems (e.g. ʒaɛ '(s)he' vs. ʒɛ 'she (i.e. cow)'). There is also the problem of knowing the syntactic antecedent of such pronouns. The antecedent of ʒɛ is ɓɛ ʒɛ, but ʒaɛ 'I', for example, does not have a syntactic antecedent (semantically the antecedent is the person speaking).

Relevant to this is the occurrence of a double usage of the determiner: a self-standing pronoun followed by a deictic. Compare the following:

ʒɛ ʒaɛ ʒaɛ 'the cow has eaten something'
ʒɛ ʒɛ ʒaɛ 'the (aforementioned) cow has eaten s.'
ʒɛ ʒaɛ ʒaɛ 'she (i.e. cow) has eaten something'
ʒɛ ʒaɛ ʒaɛ 'she here (i.e. cow) has eaten s.', 'she this ...'

The interesting point is that the deictic (which will be discussed below in 3.32) which incorporates the second determiner, can also occur with independent pronouns. In that case ʒaɛ is used for singular, ʒaɛ for plural pronouns:

ʒaɛ ʒaɛ ʒaɛ 'I here have eaten something'
ʒaɛ ʒaɛ ʒaɛ 'you (sg) there have eaten s.'
ʒaɛ ʒaɛ ʒaɛ 'you (pl) there have eaten something'

The use of ʒaɛ/ʒaɛ is logical here since all nouns with these determiners (Gender I) share the semantic feature [+human] exactly as the syntactically unspecified antecedents of the independent pronouns.

We do not find any serious arguments against interpreting the independent subject pronouns as determiners, but instead we find that this interpretation provides for an overall unified analysis, and may even open up interesting avenues of comparative studies of other Niger-Congo languages (see final conclusion below).

certain relative clause introducers and with possessive pronouns.

3.31 Numerals

The numeral 'one' is derived from the noun's determiner (Type B concord).

The root could be represented as -ñ. Examples:

(45) ðvǎŋ gǔñ 'one chief' (determiner: gǔñ)

(46) rǎtǔñ sǎñ 'one stone' (determiner: sǎñ)

(47) ðvǎm jǎñ 'one cow' (determiner: jǎñ)

The numerals 2-4 take an Aa type of concord:

(48) rǎtǔñ rǎtǔñ 'three stones' (rǎtǔñ 'three')

(49) ðvǎm ðvǎm 'four cows' (ðvǎm 'four')

The numerals from 5 onwards exhibit no agreement:

(50) ðvǎm sǎp 'ten cows'

(51) bǎbǎp bǎbǎp 'five bones'

To be included with the numerals are -vǐ 'all, the whole' and -vǎñ 'how much?, how many?'. Since these exhibit an A type of agreement, one might be tempted to interpret them as forming part of serial verb constructions (see, for example, (11) above). However, -vǐ and -vǎñ, which share a semantic feature of counting with the numerals, do not seem subjected to the tense/aspect system. They should therefore be kept distinct from the verbs. Other examples:

(52) rǎkpǎñ rǎvǐ 'the whole load'

(53) ǎ-ra ðkpǎñ ðvǎñ ǎ-yǎñ? 'how much money do you have?', "it is money Aa-how much you Aa-have"

3.32. Deictics

There are at least four deictics in Hohumono. The agreement is of Type B.

Examples with ǎrom 'man' which has gǔñ as determiner:

(54) ǎrom gǔñ 'this man (here present and visible)'

(55) ǎrom gǔñrǎ 'that particular man (referred to previously but not actually present)'

(56) ǎrom gǔñmǎ 'that particular man (present in the neighbourhood but not necessarily visible)'

(57) ǎrom gǔñmǎñ 'that man (visible at a great distance)'

3.33 Possessive pronouns

Their composition is very intricate both morphologically and phonologically since they combine features of the prefix and determiner of the object possessed, as well as of the determiner of the possessor. They have been described by Cook (1969:11). To be noted, however, is that for the first person singular when the object is in Gender I or II, the B type agreement is not with the determiner of the object, but with the 1st person independent pronoun. We have ðrom ɕɔŋm 'my man', and not *ðrom ɕɔŋwɔm on the pattern of bòtəm ɕɔŋwɔm 'my house'. Other peculiarities noted, such as the fact that the 3rd person plural possessives, with nouns having an rV- prefix, copy the vowel of the prefix as well as its consonant, as in rɛtɛn ɕrɛbɔ 'their stone', along with the tonal variations noted, make this an area where some further research is needed.

3.34 Reflexives

To form a reflexive, mɛnɛ is used with a type B concord. See, for example,

(1) above and:

(58) uɕəm gwɛm ɔ-pɛnɛ ɕwɛ-mɛnɛ 'the lizard killed himself'

(59) bɔ-pɛnɛ bɛ-mɛnɛ 'they killed themselves (i.e. people)'

However, with a 3rd person singular pronoun having a 'person' antecedent, there is no agreement on the reflexive:

(60) (ðrom gwɛm) ɔ-pɛnɛ mɛnɛ (not: *ɕwɛmɛnɛ) '(this man) killed himself'

3.35 "The other"

B concord on ɕɛɕɛnɛ:

(61) ɕwɛm ɕɛnɛ ɕɛ-ɕɛnɛ ɕɛpɛnɛpɛn nɛ hɛ yɛp 'that cow did not see that other black cow', "cow B-that [B-other B-Aa-black one that] not-Aa-see". This sentence involves verb-object inversion as in uwɛ hɛ rɛp 'he did not buy a book', "book he-not

(62) ðrom ɕwɛ-ɕɛɕɛnɛ 'the other man'

3.36 Adjectives

Probably the most complex area of Hohumono syntax recorded so far is that of the Adjectives, a term which will cover, for the purpose of this description, all those constructions which are translated by adjectives in English. The problems can be summarized as follows:

- a. There is probably no independent class of adjectives in Hohumono;
- b. Adjectival functions are expressed through nouns, verbs and relative clause structures;
- c. Adjectival verbs are submitted to the regular tense/aspect system of the language;
- d. Adjectival nouns come under the rules of the noun class system;
- e. There are several tonal classes in the verb system which produce different sets with the same syntactic function;
- f. Not all roots can be unambiguously classified as either nouns or verbs: some appear ambivalent;
- g. Some items which can be assigned safely to a particular group do not always share all the features of that group, i.e. they appear to be defective.

We will proceed by describing the main features of the three adjectival functions and by choosing a few typical roots as examples. Their syntactic behaviour, especially as regards nominal class concord, will be illustrated.

Adjectival verbs

They appear in two forms: the short form and the reduplicated form.¹¹

Negative structures always use the short form. Positive structures only use the short form to express a statement with emphasis. The reduplicated form is of the type root-Ca-root where C stands for one of several possible consonants. Concord with the subject is of type A, which is to be expected since these forms are basically verbs.

There are at least two tonal classes in the adjectival verbs. A typical example of class 1 is dam 'to be good':

(63) o-dámádám 'he is good'

11 What is said here about adjectival verbs concerning short forms and reduplication, as well as the different tonal classes, applies to non-adjectival verbs as well. However, no detailed analysis has been made. In Cook (1969:16) the reduplicated form (termed by his assistant 'plural' of the verb) is described as "not refer[ring] only to the number of the subject, but [also] to the action which the verb represents; plural verbs usually have the meaning of repeated, sustained or continuous action, or action by a large number of subjects and/or upon a large number of objects. Sometimes they appear to be essentially emphatic forms of the 'singular' verb." So far I have been unable to verify these findings. Note, however, that my assistant appears to consider the short forms to be the emphatic ones. Moreover, I have the impression that the two forms are to be distinguished in their syntactic use, rather than in their semantic content.

clause differs from that of the verb in a matrix sentence. Examples:

- (79) nyəŋ rəŋtəŋ sareŋkəŋdāŋ (< se - ŋ - rə - dāŋdāŋ; compare the latter with o-ŋəŋdāŋ 'it is good'). 'I saw a nice stone',
"I saw a stone which is nice"
- (80) pəŋhəŋ fəŋŋ faupināpən (< fe - ŋ - (p)u - pināpən) bu-kūm 'those black chickens are here'. (compare with o-pināpən 'it is black')

What we have called a relative clause construction may also occur without its head noun. It then means 'the ____ (big, black, good ...) one'. Compare the following:

- (81) rəŋtəm sə ro-pināpən 'the (aforementioned) worm is black' (adjectival verb construction)
- (82) rəŋtəm saropināpən 'a black worm', "worm that is black" (relative clause construction)
- (83) o-ra saropināpən sə 'it is the (aforementioned) black one (i.e. worm)' (self-standing relative clause construction)

Finally consider the following sentence:

- (84) nyəŋ rəŋtəŋ rəŋtəŋ : səŋkəpəŋ, səŋbibi, ŋrə səŋpaipai 'I saw three stones, a big one, a small one and a thin one'

(84) illustrates a new problem: kpəŋ 'to be big' is a regular adjectival verb of the first tonal class. It marks the agreement (rə) with the understood head noun rəŋtəŋ 'stone' on the pattern of the self-standing relative clause structure as in (83). Both ŋbibi (< hēbibi) 'small' and paipai 'thin', however, do not exhibit a subject agreement, and they are probably not verbs. Nevertheless, they occur in a position regularly occupied by verbs, namely, the verb phrase of what appears to be a relative clause structure. We need additional criteria.

If we accept as nouns those items that may occur after o-ra 'it is', as in

- (85) o-ra rəŋtəŋ 'it is a stone'
then (h)ŋbibi and paipai are nouns:
- (86) o-ra ŋbibi 'it is small'
- (87) o-ra paipai 'it is thin'

For (h)ŋbibi this classification is supported by the presence of a regular noun prefix hə- (no plural with hə- available though).

That (h)ŋbibi and paipai are not verbs appears also from the fact

that they cannot occur independently as a verb in a sentence with subject concord as dam in o-dam 'it is good'. We cannot have:

(88) *o-ḡbibi

(89) *o-paipai

A lexical item which in some respects behaves like (h)ḡbibi and paipai, and which appears equally resistant to classification, is ṣtṣtṣ 'right, proper'. This word does not exhibit any verbal agreement, always follows the noun it qualifies, and is never joined to it by q:

(90) ḡrom ṣtṣtṣ 'a right man (appropriate for a particular assignment, for example)'

(91) *o-ṣṣ ṣtṣtṣ (compare (86)-(87) above)

(92) *o-ṣtṣtṣ (compare (88)-(89) above)

Like (h)ḡbibi and paipai, ṣtṣtṣ may occur in what appear to be relative clause constructions:

(93) bārom bāṣtṣtṣ 'the right men'

just like (h)ḡbibi in (84) and in

(94) bārom bāḡbibi 'the small men'

The solution to the analysis of these structures lies probably in the absence of a subject concord, in the "relative clauses" such as (93) and (94), which distinguishes them from regular relative clauses, as well as in the tone of the (assimilated) determiner. When the determiner occurs alone, its tone is high:

(95) rṣṣṣ ṣṣ 'the stone'

But in the regular relative clause constructions (such as in (79), (80) and (82) its tone is mid. In (93) and (94) and also in (84) (for ḡbibi and paipai), where it is associated with adjectival nouns, however, its tone is high. This allows us to interpret, for example, bāḡbibi in (94) not as a relative clause construction, in spite of a strong resemblance, but as a structure of two nominals joined by q 'of (possessive marker)', the first of which is represented by its determiner. bāḡbibi is considered then to be a possessive construction, and (94) bārom bāḡbibi is to

be translated literally as "men, the ones of smallness", i.e. 'small men'.

4. Conclusion: a historical note

The study of the Hohumono noun class system and especially of the function of the determiners raises interesting questions. Since we find a comparable complexity in neighbouring languages, we are sure the system described here is not a local innovation. Hohumono, Loke and Mbembe inherited it from their common ancestor.¹⁴ Not enough is known yet of other Cross River languages that have noun classes to be able to systematically compare theirs with the system described here. In many Niger-Congo languages, however, we do find determiners. In some cases these play a role in the noun class system of these languages, as, for example, in Tan (see Hoffmann 1978). Other languages, like Baule, have the fixed element marking definiteness when affixed to nouns (see Tinyan 1975). We also note that in a great many languages, Yoruba and Gade being typical examples, we find a set of independent pronouns exhibiting characteristics which are clearly comparable to the determiners/pronouns we find in Hohumono. In all, or most of these cases, can we speak of a common historical link?

In order to determine whether the complexity of the Hohumono class system with its extensive use of determiners is a relic of an older system, possibly going back to the earliest ancestor language, or whether on the contrary we have in Hohumono and other closely related languages an expanded version of a much simpler inherited system, or - more unlikely, given the Tan case - a complete innovation, we will have to undertake a comparative study of determiners in as many Niger-Kordofanian languages as possible.

¹⁴ We should note that Loke and Mbembe belong to one subgroup of Upper Cross, called the East-West group by Dimmendaal (see Dimmendaal 1978:63), while Hohumono belongs to another, called the North-South group. During my present research among the Upper Cross languages, I have found that the Hohumono class system with its extensive use of determiners is by no means general. In the East-West group, besides Loke and Mbembe, only LeYighe and LuBilo show traces of it. In the North-South group, besides Hohumono, I have only found evidence of determiners in the Ubaghara languages,

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